

An Agent of Chaos

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Category: Doctor Who

Genre: Drama, Horror

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-11 15:23:58

Updated: 2016-04-11 15:23:58

Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:52:35

Rating: T

Chapters: 2

Words: 1,587

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The reason why the Doctor never sleeps, Or: In which the last Time Lord has PTSD, Or: One of the many bad decisions of the High Council. Description of the Time War, Trigger warnings: Body Horror, Violence, Death.

1. Chaos

There was an explosion behind him and he was thrown face first into a pile of rubble. The swirling dust from his impact burned in his lungs as he gasped for oxygen in the shrieking air. Swiftly, his head twisted around, leading his spine which cracked back into place as he moved, to look upon the carnage that had been wrought by the falling shell, not far from where he had stood not a moment ago.

A poor soldier, one of his, was caught in the flames. He fought with them, struggling with the licking tongues as with a multi-limbed monster, or a pack of hyenas after his hearts. The harsh, flickering light of the fire revealed every detail of the crumbled skyscraper with brutal and uncaring honesty. Every pool of sticky vermillion blood, every stain of green ooze slowly dripping down a jagged wall; every scrap of metal or shard of glass, all of it, all the horror of the War was shown to him. But his eyes did not care for the details, for the small things that were the final pieces of a once sophisticated society. No, his insolent eyes were riveted on the struggling soldier who was stumbling about as if drowning in the depths of the fire.

At last he stumbled out, grasping at his throat, breathing the hot air. Except that now, the unfortunate soul was burning with a new fire of his own making. His eyes forced him to watch as the tortuous, ravenous flames of golden plasma ravenously ate away at the remains of what had once been a person.

The guardsman's armour cracked, chasms appeared in the red poly-carbide, chasms that widened before finally splitting like the shell of an egg. The soldier's body peeled away and the new being

pulled itself, huge and bulging, out of its previous form like a snake shedding its skin. Bloated veins beat in unison under the skin, orbs like glass balls shone in the flickering firelight, twinkling with a new-found hunger for blood.

He felt his body cower into a slab of concrete behind him, further away from the monster that had once called him "sir". The six-limbed beast did not take notice of its former officer, and he knew it would not attack yet. It was not ready, not fully formed. But it would be, very soon.

Already the paper-thin, translucent skin was thickening, becoming opaque. It was forming the heavy plates of scale that would shield its hearts from enemy fire. The enormous head raised itself to the wind, and the eyes gazed upon the battlefield. Still growing claws slowly etched symmetrical pattern into a sheet of ruined metal and digging long, deep, grooves into the blood-soaked ground beneath it.

It only took four minutes, a small while for death and fiery rebirth to transform a loyal guardsman, a valiant soldier and a good man, into a fierce and powerful weapon, into a beast without mercy or remorse; reborn as a creature that could rend metal to shreds in a single swipe of its razor-sharp claws, or crush even the strongest hull between its teeth. A true monster that would enjoy each and every act of war it committed.

But theses monsters, these unholy creations, were a mighty advantage on the battlefield.

The former man took a breath of the ashen wind, and, catching some fatal breeze, lolloped off after the scent of war.

Under some force, he lifted himself from the ground, taking care to retrieve his well-used staser rifle from beneath him. He had more in common with the beast than anyone would possibly think or he cared to admit; more in common with the Lovecraftian monstrosities that his kind had bred, including the one that had just recently vacated the premises. They were, in fact, the same.

For if he died, if by some stroke of misfortune, this body, his body, perished. No longer would he bear the scarred, yet affable façade he wore now. No longer would he be the intriguing magician or the mysterious traveller, or even the reluctant officer. No. He would be like the soldier: emotion personified, hate turned to savagery, anger to power and fear to impenetrable defences. His skills would be amplified and twisted, his body made such as to give him full range of these novel weapons of mass destruction.

The War had not started to end well, but this was worse than anything anyone, had, is, or ever will purport to predict and foresee.

His shoulder jolted backwards as a mighty tremor shook the ground. The heavy strides of a sentient tool of war rattled the remains of the skyscraper. He watched it canter past on multitudinous limbs that alternated between running and grappling with the half dozen or so adversaries trapped within its grasp. It roared, a feral roar, devoid of any and all residual personhood, before biting down on the hardened casing of its alien enemy. Green ooze squelched out of the punctures, running down onto the creature's face. It did not care,

all it wanted was destruction and death to its enemies, whoever those enemies might be. It only wanted to sate the insatiable hunger for blood in its gut and douse everlasting flame of anger roaring in its twin hearts.

His spine shuddered as the one he used to call Karell whumped away. He determined the coast was clear and tiptoed back into the fray, where he, and all those like him, belonged.

He did not last much longer.

A bolt of energy ripped through his shoulder, searing the flesh as it tore past muscle and bone alike. He screamed in pain, his entire being feeling the shot splinter through him like fatal lightning.

This was the end, the neutraliser blast had killed him.

But not before his own kind, the very ones he was fighting to protect pulled him back from the shores of the river Stix and forced his dying mind to commit on last atrocious act, obey one last horrifying order: Change.

He felt it, the fire burnt away each nerve ending, each muscle, each bone, reduced his leaking blood to iron-filled vapour. His screaming mind never found a mouth or a throat to vocalise the agonising pain. The super-heated plasma burned from the source in his entrails, fusing them. The tortuous fire twisted, writhed and coiled into a new shape for him to assume.

His non-existent eyes looked down at hands that should not exist. The fingers, once dextrous and gentle, turned to claws, hardened scales spreading up the arms. Another set of limbs sprouted from his flank into his field of view. He felt the rage build up and begin to burn, felt the hunger gnaw at his gut. Felt the scent of the battle, felt the exhilarating call of Chaos. He was changing, dying faster and faster as his body grew larger and new, boneless limbs multiplied exponentially.

His mind found a voice and screamed for mercy, for death, but his new vocal chords roared in triumph, a loud bellow sounding like a million death-tolls. He howled again, hoping to find his own plea in the din.

2. Order

The sound woke him up.

The air was cold against his sweat covered skin, the covers were soaked and tangled. There was not a single draft or sound in the room, save for his own erratic breathing. A single bead of sweat rolled from his brow down the side of his face and courses down to his neck.

He stared ahead at the darkness, listening to the gentle hum of the surrounding vessel.

He sighed, feeling the covers restrict the movements of his ribcage. His hearts were pounding, but the Doctor forced his frightened pulse

to calm itself. It was over, all of it.

He brought one hand to meet the other, feeling every joint, every fold, every possible detail. His arms clutched his chest, and his hand lightly pressed on each rib, counting them over and over again.

He was fine, he was safe, he was still the Doctor. It was just a dream. A nightmare set within a nightmare, and illusion set in a reality, but an illusion none-the-less.

Slowly, he allowed his fingers to rise up and trace his own features, feeling his face, it was different than it had been that day, but it was his. It was still his, and blissfully Gallifreyan.

He had regenerated twice since that particular day, and both times it had gone as smoothly as he had ever been able to manage. He had come out, in the end, looking like he should and acting like he should. Not a monster, not a weaponised parody of a Time Lord acting out the obsolete orders of a long dead High Command.

Just himself, the Doctor, Theta Sigma.

With one last calming exhalation of cool air, his panicked mind finally regained a semblance of peace.

He was safe now, there was no longer anything in the Universe that he couldn't handle, couldn't survive. The Daleks had been reduced to interstellar dust by the Bad Wolf, and the Time Lordsâ€

They had had to be stopped.

All that mattered at the moment was that he was safe. A light wave of comfort washed over his consciousness, the Doctor basked in the presence of his beloved ship.

She would keep him safe, as she always has.

He was himself, she was herself, and there were safe and together.

And for now that was all that mattered.

End
file.